

*Environmental Justice Webinar Series for Houses of Worship and Communities*

# Getting Surplus Farm Produce, through Gleaning, to People in Need



**April 24, 2023**

*\* Please note this webinar is being recorded and will be posted on an EPA webpage.*

# PANELISTS

**Pastor Zach Hopple**, *Christ United Methodist Church*  
(Welcome & Introductions)

**Tom O'Donnell**, Sustainability Coordinator,  
Sustainability Materials Management, Region 3, *U.S. EPA*

**Lynette Johnson**, Executive Director,  
*Society of St. Andrew*

**Mike Smith**, Master Gardener, Project Leader of the  
Community Garden, *Concord United Methodist Church*

**Danny Gogal and Ericka Farrell**, *Office of  
Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights, U.S. EPA*  
(Facilitators)



# Gathering Surplus Farm Produce by Gleaning

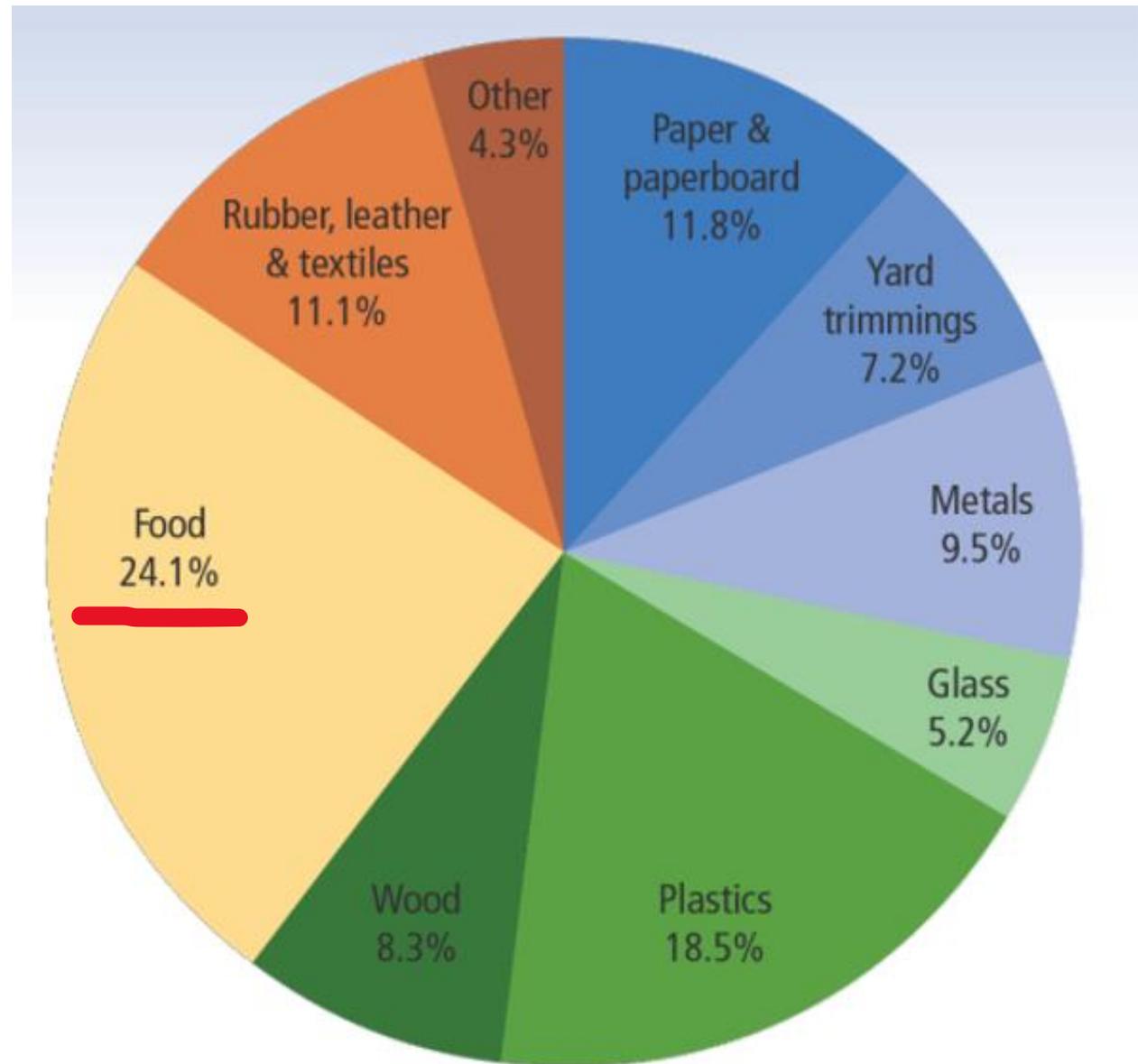
Tom O'Donnell, U.S. EPA Region 3



Sustainable Management  
of Food

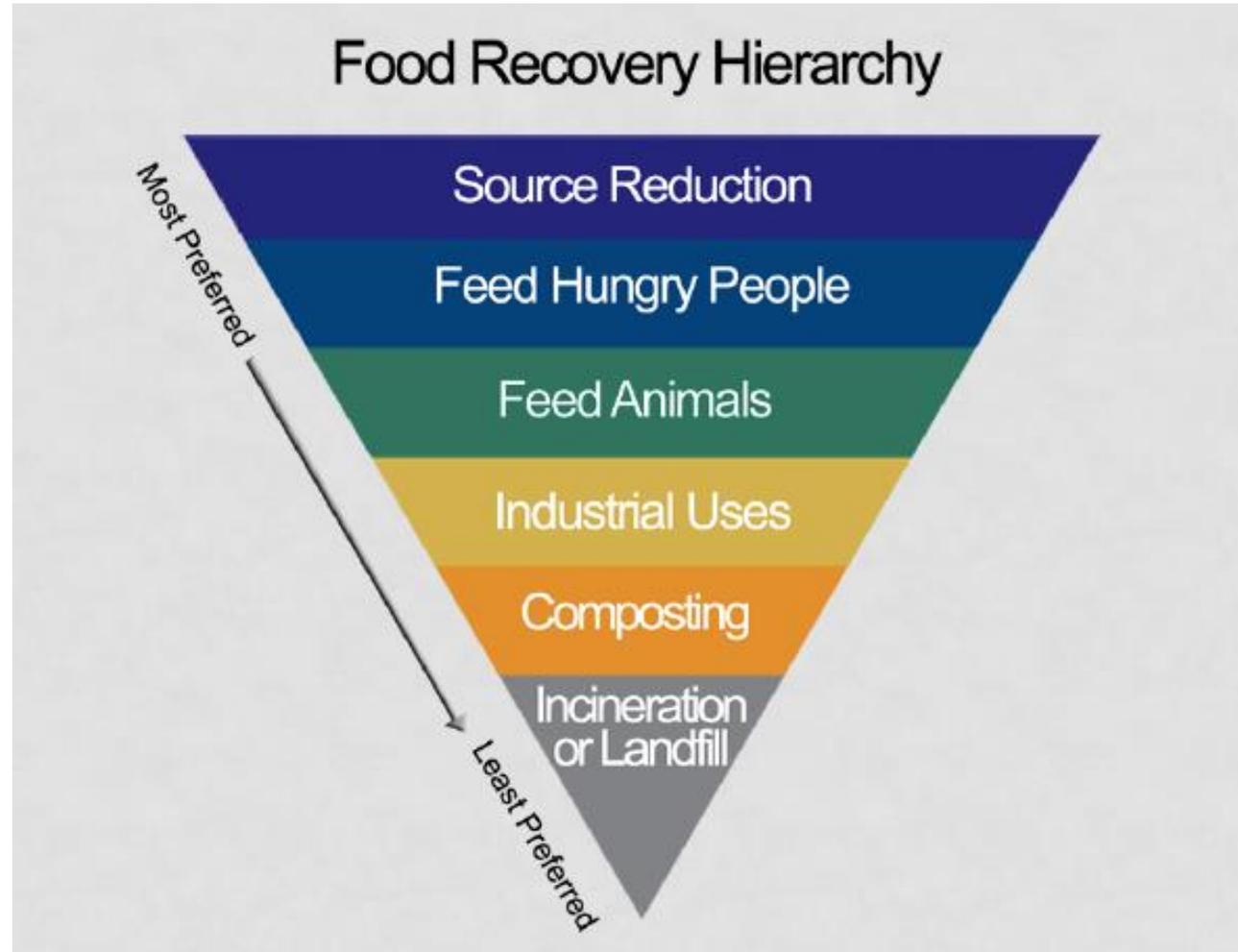
# Total MSW Landfilled (by material)

EPA Facts and Figure Report  
December 2020  
2018 Data



# What we Learned

The heart of the problem opened new opportunities



# Where Does Food Waste Occur?

▶ Waste mostly occurs at homes and restaurants

★ Losses occur at farms where the opportunities are very significant.

# Farm Produce Not Eaten by People?

**16-17 millions tons .....**

**.....more than half was edible**

**a \$14 billion value**

# Reducing Farm Food Loss can Help Farmers .....

**Earn more money**

**Conserve Natural Resources**

**Reduce Pollution**

**Soften Climate Change Impacts**

**Create jobs**

**Feed more people**

**31% of food insecure people are  
not eligible for SNAP**

**How can these 11+ million people get  
more affordable, fresh, nutritious  
produce**

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The text is centered on the white background.

# Traditional Farm Gleaning and Donation Solutions?

# Edible Surplus Produce

unharvested	18,600 million pounds
gleaned	48 million pounds

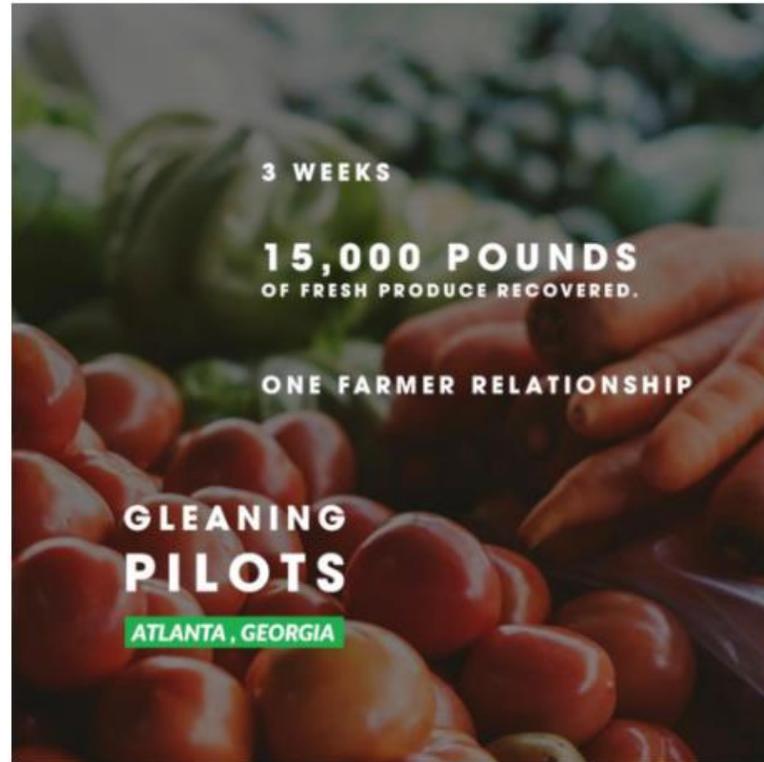
## EPA 2021 - 2023 Gleaning Grants

We are interested in financial stability, jobs, data, nutrition, the environment, policy, and helping people glean lots more food

BGP: Fresh and  
Glean with  
Grasso Girls  
Farm in New  
Jersey



# Food Recovery Network at Colleges and Universities



# Society of St. Andrew: Row by Row Measuring Excess Produce in Tennessee

## LETTUCE EXAMPLE

Measuring and marking rows

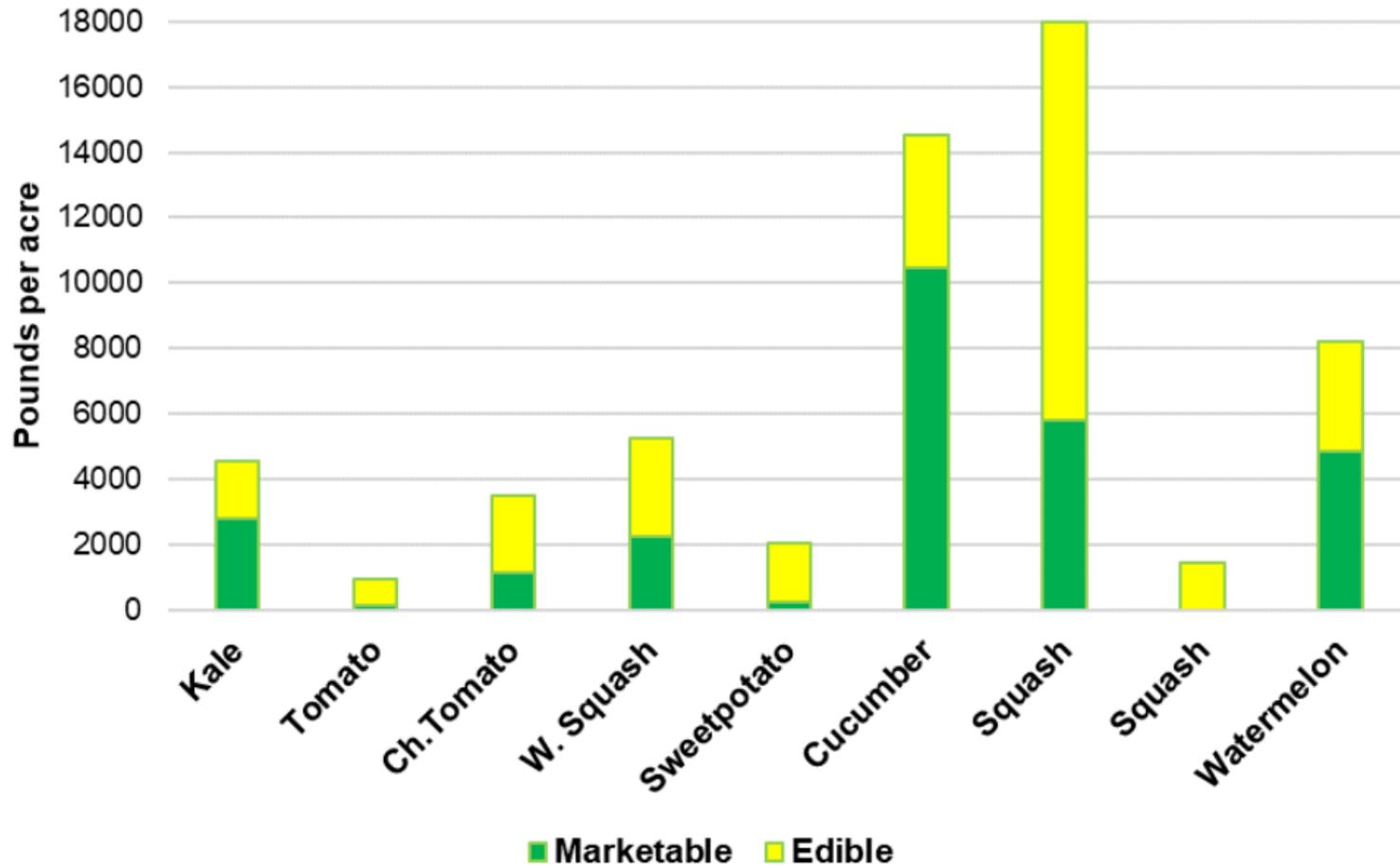


Harvesting



# Data to Inform Policy

Estimated usable pounds available per acre



# Association of Gleaning Organizations

- ▶ Outreach and technical assistance to gleaners
- ▶ Note: May 3 - 5 annual conference in Milwaukee <https://gleaningorgs.com/event/2023-international-gleaning-symposium>

# Gleaning: A Faithful Response to Hunger in our Midst

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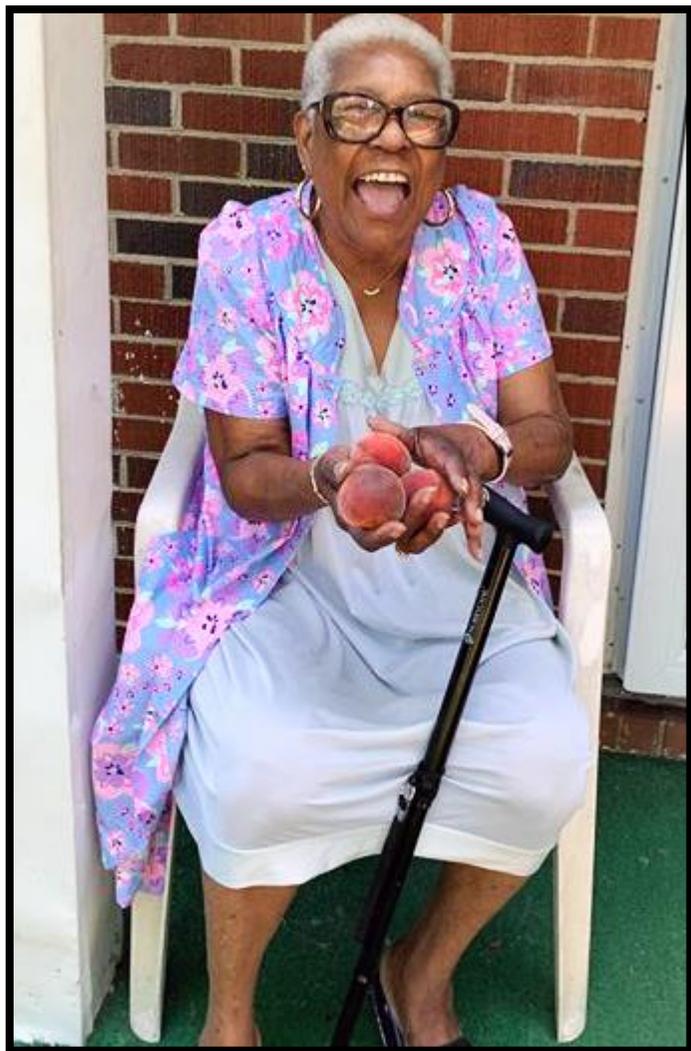


Lynette Johnson *(she/her)*  
*Executive Director*

**Society of St. Andrew**  
endhunger.org

# Quick Facts About the Society of St. Andrew

- Nation's oldest and geographically largest gleaning organization
- Founded in 1979 as an intentional Christian community (along the lines of Koinonia Farms)
- Chartered as a nonprofit in 1984
- Now work on an ecumenical and interfaith basis and with secular groups as well
- Recover and distribute, on average, 20-25 million pounds of fresh produce each year across about 18 states
- With the help of 15,000-30,000 volunteers annually, work with about 1,000 farmers and 1,700 feeding agencies yearly
- Headquartered in rural SW Virginia, SoSA has regional offices in AL, FL, GA, MS, NC/SC, TN, IN, and Delmarva (opened 2022); about 60 staff members altogether
- Annual budget (cash): \$4 million
- Name comes from the Gospel of John's telling of the Feeding of 5,000. Andrew is the disciple who brings a child with their lunch to Jesus, and that lunch, multiplied, becomes so abundant that the entire crowd is fed, with baskets and baskets of leftovers.



The Society of St. Andrew brings people together to harvest and share healthy food, reduce food waste, and build caring communities by offering nourishment to hungry neighbors.

# Houses of worship addressing community hunger

Hunger exists in every community  
in America,  
... and in every house of worship.

And in pretty much every faith  
tradition, with language direct or  
flowery, faithful people are  
commanded or called to care for  
hungry neighbors, people in need,  
“the least among us.”

Whatever way the charge is given,  
the sense behind it is that, **as a  
community we are not whole nor can  
we be about God’s business, if  
anyone in our community lacks the  
basic necessities of life.**



Three  
Faithful  
Steps





Gleaning is tangible evidence of God's provision and abundance.

It is as old as the children of Israel collecting daily manna for sustenance as they wandered forty years in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

It is part of the Law of Moses, spelled out in the Torah:

*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien.*

## Why glean today?

### Benefits of Gleaning

- Feeding hungry neighbors
- Living out your faith commitment
- Getting out in the fresh air with like-minded friends
- Keeping excess food out of landfills
- Ensuring that inputs (soil, water, seed, nutrients, etc.) meet their best use
- Provide nourishing food free of charge to local feeding agencies, freeing their budgets for other critical needs (tires on the van, shelter beds, program staff, proteins, etc.)
- Building a more caring community

Gleaning is a great idea, but there's a lot to consider, starting with Where are the farms?, and When are the crops?

## Elements of Gleaning

- Ripe, unmarketable but safe and edible crop
- Offered by a grower
- Agency to receive the food gleaned
- Volunteers to glean it
- Supplies
- Way to transport food to agency

## Considerations

- Many growers unwilling to open fields for a one-off event
- Growers have increasingly strict field and food safety guidelines to meet
- Without experience, you may have no clue how much food you'll glean – and whether your agency of choice will be open or have a way to store the food you offer
- Do you have knowledge and means to provide appropriate tax receipting to the grower?
- How do you know what supplies you'll need?

## Our best advice to you

- Don't reinvent the wheel! The learning curve for "doing it right" is steep. And when you do it wrong, you turn farmers off to gleaning their fields in the future.
- There are 150 or more gleaning organizations in the US, working across a broad area of the country. Find one of these organizations near you and work with them. Contact: [endhunger.org/volunteer](https://endhunger.org/volunteer) and tell us where you are. We'll connect you with one of our gleaning areas or another organization closer to you.
- Do a lot of listening before you take action.
- Start small. One program, one town – or even one city block.
- Think outside the box about what it means to glean.

What about gleaning on  
public lands, greenways,  
or even parking lot  
landscaping?

What about planting an  
edible churchyard?



A produce pickup will take you to a farm packing house, where you'll load up with fresh produce and take it back to your community, where folks can bag it right out of the pickup truck to take home and prepare on the same day as harvest!





Backyard gleaning is *\*really\** a neighbor helping neighbor model of food sharing.

When fruit is left on trees and falls to the ground, it invites critters of all sorts to the yard.

Gleaning solves a problem for the homeowner—and for hungry families nearby!



Farmers market gleaning requires more planning and commitment, but can provide a steady source of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables over a long growing season to feeding agencies in your community.

The Society of St. Andrew is glad to help you think through and organize for farmers market gleaning.

The easiest of all? A summer to fall Share Our Surplus program at your house of worship.

Backyard gardeners bring their surplus to share, and everyone can take what they need. A love offering can go to support local feeding programs.

People in your congregation who are hungry (often a hidden face of hunger) can take their fill without stigma.

Refrigerate what's left and take to a nearby feeding agency the next day.



# Local Gleaning Successes: Concord United Methodist Church



**Mike Smith**  
Master Gardener, Project Leader  
Concord United Methodist Church





## Local Gleaning Successes: Concord United Methodist Church

### **Our Programs:**

- **Crop Drops – involves ALL!**
- **Farmers Markets**
- **Local Farmers**



# Local Gleaning Successes: Concord United Methodist Church

## *Our Programs:*

- **Colleges/University  
Agriculture  
Departments**
- **Community Gardens**
- **Local Business Gleaning**
  - **Edible Arrangement**
  - **Einstein Bagels**
  - **Panera Bread**



A photograph of a field of purple flowers, possibly lavender, with a wooden crate in the foreground. The crate is filled with green leafy plants, likely kale or a similar vegetable. The background is a soft-focus field of similar purple flowers under a bright sky.

**QUESTIONS?**

**EVALUATION:**

<https://forms.gle/SgaW68rdqbJkZYcH7>

# CONTACTS

- ✿ **Tom O'Donnell**, Region 3, US EPA,  
[odonnell.tom@epa.gov](mailto:odonnell.tom@epa.gov)
- ✿ **Lynette Johnson**, Society of St. Andrew,  
[lynette@endhunger.org](mailto:lynette@endhunger.org)
- ✿ **Mike Smith**, *Concord United Methodist Church*,  
[michael09071948@gmail.com](mailto:michael09071948@gmail.com)
- ✿ **Pastor Zach Hopple**, *Christ United Methodist Church*,  
[zach.hopple@cumclansdale.org](mailto:zach.hopple@cumclansdale.org)
- ✿ **Danny Gogal**, US EPA,  
[gogal.danny@epa.gov](mailto:gogal.danny@epa.gov)
- ✿ **Ericka Farrell**, US EPA,  
[farrell.ericka@epa.gov](mailto:farrell.ericka@epa.gov)

